Advisory Council of People of Indian Origin' to be chaired by the Prime Minister to serve as a strategic 'think tank'. The proposal for setting up a Welfare Fund for overseas Indian Workers is under finalization. Work on establishing the PIO University is expected to commence shortly.

(e) The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) is the nodal Authority maintaining data on foreign remittances. The remittance by overseas Indians in the past five years, as per the statistics of the RBI, is indicated in the Statement. (*See* below) Details of remittances, State-wise and category-wise is not maintained by this Ministry.

Statement

Details of data of private remittances by overseas Indians during the past five years

(Source: RBI website)

Private Remittances (upto September, 2007)

Year	In US $ million	In Rs. Crore
2003-04	18885	86764
2004-05	14494	66861
2005-06	24102	106860
2006-07	27195	122635
2007 -08*	18420	75238
*(upto September 2007)		

Protection of Indian women abroad

3313. MS. MABEL REBELLO: Will the Minister of OVERSEAS INDIAN AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has taken various initiatives to protect women workers abroad;

(b) if so, the details thereof, indicating the women employed abroad who have been rescued by Government through these initiatives; and

(c) the action plan of Government to punish the fake travel agents found indulging in trafficking of women on illegal documents?

THE MINISTER OF OVERSEAS INDIAN AFFAIRS (SHRI VAYALAR RAVI): (a) and (b) All the Indian emigrant workers under the emigration check required (ECR) category proceeding for employment abroad in the 17 ECR countries seek clearance from the offices of Protectors of Emigrants (POEs) under the Emigration Act, 1983. Following measures are in place for the welfare and protection of Indian women workers abroad:

* No emigration clearance is granted to women below the age of thirty (30) years if they are seeking employment in ECR country.
* The employment contract duly attested by the Indian Mission, should be between the worker and the employer directly and not with the recruiting agent.
* In case of recruitment of individual Indian emigrant worker including women directly by the Foreign Employer a bank guarantee of US $ 2500 is to be deposited

by the FE in the concerned Indian Mission. In absence of fulfilling the above criteria, the emigration clearance will be granted only on the basis of the availability of the specimen employment contract/labour contract duly attested by the Indian Mission concerned.

* This Ministry has also entered into bilateral labour agreements with the UAE and Kuwait, to ensure protection to emigrant workers. These MOUs provide for a Joint Committee consisting of representatives of both countries to meet every six months to discuss and resolve grievances of workers. Further, to ensure protection and welfare of Indian workers comprehensive amendmnet of the Emigration Act, 1983, is already underway.

(c) Any recruitment of Indian nationals for employment abroad without registration certificate under Section 10 of the Emigration Act, 1983 is an offence punishable under Section 24 of the Emigration Act, 1983.

On receipt of complaint against registered Recruiting Agents show-cause notice is served which may lead in serious cases to suspension and cancellation of the Registration Certificate and forfeiture of Bank Guarantee. The complaints received against the unregistered recruiting agents are referred to concerned State Governments/Police Authorities/Protectors of Emigrants for investigation and action for violation of Section 10 of Emigration Act, 1983 and other provisions of the law as appropriate.

Restriction on employers and agents

3314. DR. (SHRIMATI) NAJMA A. HEPTULLA:
SHRI MAHENDRA MOHAN:

Will the Minister of OVERSEAS INDIAN AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government is going to impose restrictions on employers and agents for taking domestic servants abroad;

(b) if so, the details of guidelines/rules in this regard;

(c) whether Government is aware that there are organized gangs who recruit the Indian women for domestic help and take them abroad and force them into prostitution; and

(d) if so, the number of such cases that have been detected by Government and the number of women who have been rescued so far?

THE MINISTER OF OVERSEAS INDIAN AFFAIRS (SHRI VAYALAR RAVI): (a) and (b) No emigrant worker including domestic servants under the Emigration Check Required (ECR) category seeking employment to any of the 17 ECR countries can proceed abroad without seeking emigration clearance from the offices of Protectors of Emigrants (POEs) under the Emigration Act, 1983. The emigration clearance to domestic servants/unskilled/ vulnerable category is granted based on the duly attested employment documents by the concerned Indian Missions. Further in case of recruitment of individual Indian emigrant worker including women directly by the Foreign Employer a bank guarantee of US $ 2500 is to be deposited by the FE in the concerned Indian Mission. No women below the age of 30 years having an ECR passport can take up employment in ECR countries.

(c) and (d) Any recruitment of Indian nationals including women for employment abroad without registration certificate under Section 10 of the Emigration Act, 1983 is an offence